

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 02952 221805Z  
ACTION SS-25

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-----118757 221813Z /46

O P 221751Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3418  
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 02952

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK  
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: DEVELOPING BRITISH TACTICS

REF: LONDON 2838

1. REFTTEL DISCUSSES SOME OF THE ATTITUDES WHICH AFFECT  
BRITISH REACTIONS TO THE SALISBURY ANNOUNCEMENT. IT  
CONCLUDES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HERE WILL REGARD THE  
FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN SALISBURY AS A  
MAJOR AND HOPEFUL STEP FORWARD IN THE RHODESIA PROCESS.  
WE THINK THIS HAS SEVERAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BRITISH  
RELATIONSHIP TO THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS.

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2. THERE IS A GROWING SENSE HERE THAT THE ANGLO-  
AMERICAN PROPOSALS - IF NOT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIA-  
TIVE - ARE REACHING THE POINT OF EXHAUSTION. AND  
THERE IS ALSO LESS ACCEPTANCE OF THE "BARBELL" CON-  
CEPT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH THE ANGLO-AMERICAN  
PROPOSALS MIGHT BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN TWO EQUAL BUT  
POLARIZED ENTITIES, THE INTERNAL GROUP AND THE

EXTERNAL GROUP. FOR THE BRITISH, THE CONCEPT NOW IS INCREASINGLY HOW TO GRAFT SOMETHING ON TO THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT, HOW POSSIBLY TO EXPAND THE AGREEMENT FROM ITS INTERNAL BASE. THE BRITISH BELIEVE THE CENTER OF GRAVITY FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT HAS DEFINITELY SHIFTED TO SALISBURY, AND THE TACTICAL OBJECTIVE IS TO INFLUENCE THE INTERNAL TALKS SO THAT THE EVENTUAL ACCORD HAS A CHANCE OF SOME INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE AND CAN BE DEFENDED IN PARLIAMENT.

3. ADDRESSEES WILL HAVE NOTED THAT THE DEBATE HERE ON THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT IS NOT SO MUCH ON THE QUESTION OF HOW IT COMPARES WITH THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS, BUT RATHER, ON WHETHER IT SATISFIES THE LONG ESTABLISHED "SIX PRINCIPLES" FOR A SETTLEMENT. THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE, WHICH REQUIRES THAT ANY SETTLEMENT MUST BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA AS A WHOLE IS KEY. THE PEARCE COMMISSION FOUNDERED ON THIS PRINCIPLE SEVEN YEARS AGO. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT OR THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION WILL ENDORSE AN AGREEMENT UNTIL THIS TEST OF ACCEPTABILITY HAS BEEN PASSED. WE THINK, HOWEVER, THAT BRITISH LEADERS IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT WILL STRONGLY URGE THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS TO ARRANGE AN AFRICAN REFERENDUM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. EFFORTS BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT  
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TO DISRUPT SUCH AN EXPRESSION OF AFRICAN OPINION WOULD FURTHER BRAND NKOMO AND MUGABE AS ANTI-DEMOCRATIC. AND IF THE REFERENDUM WERE SUCCESSFUL, PARTICULARLY IF CARRIED OFF BY THE SAME MUZOREWA WHO ORGANIZED THE RESISTANCE TO THE PEARCE COMMISSION, THEN THE POPULAR MOMENTUM HERE TO ENDORSE THE SETTLEMENT WOULD BE ALMOST IRRESISTIBLE.

4. A COROLLARY TO THE ABOVE IS THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL FIND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO REMAIN NEUTRAL TO THE SALISBURY ACCORD. WE EXPECT BRITISH LEADERS AND OFFICIALS WILL BEGIN QUIETLY TO ADVISE THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS HOW TO CONTINUE IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH SMITH, PARTICULARLY ON TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS, HOW TO MAKE THE FINAL PACKAGE RESEMBLE OUR ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AND HOW TO DEVELOP THEIR RELATIONS WITH OUTSIDE PARTIES SUCH AS THE FRONTLINE PRESIDENTS, OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS, AND AT THE UNITED NATIONS.

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## Message Attributes

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